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ABSTRACT

The State Council of Higher Education for Virginia examined the status of remediation in higher education in the state using a population of first-time college students who graduated from a high school in Virginia, attended a Virginia college, and took at least one remedial course at a community college or private college. Over the last 5 years, the percentage of students enrolled in at least one remedial course has remained relatively constant. In 1996-1997, 20% of these first-time college students enrolled in at least one remedial course. In 1998-1999, the percentage rose to 21%, and this percentage has remained constant over the last 2 years. A slightly higher percentage of these students are enrolled in remedial mathematics than in remedial English courses. The report outlines some areas for further study. (SLD)

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A SCHEV Issue Brief

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Remediation in Virginia Higher Education

HE 035 622

SCHEV
STATE COUNCIL OF HIGHER EDUCATION FOR VIRGINIA
ADVANCING VIRGINIA THROUGH HIGHER EDUCATION

December 9, 2002

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ISSUE BRIEF ON REMEDIATION

Virginia law mandates that the community colleges teach remediation education for the public institutions. Section *§4-5.10* of the Appropriation Act states that "Senior institutions of higher education shall make arrangements with community colleges for the remediation of students accepted for admission by the senior institutions." Private colleges are not affected by this requirement.

The chart below provides five-year summary of the percentage of first-time college students who graduated from a Virginia high school and enrolled in the fall semester at a college in Virginia and have taken at least one remedial course at a community college or a private college. The chart also provides the percentage of student registrations in remedial courses. It should be noted that students may be registered in more than one remedial course and therefore a student may be represented multiple times in the course registrations.

Remediation Summary (Part A)
1996-2001

Year	# of First-Time Freshman Graduated from a Virginia High School and Enrolled at Virginia College (Unduplicated)	% of First-time College Students Graduated from VA High School Enrolled in at least One Remedial Course (Unduplicated)	% of Student Registrations in Remedial Courses			
			English, General	English 2nd Language	Reading	Math, General
1996-97	36,669	20%	44%	3%	0.44%	52%
1997-98	39,304	20%	45%	2%	0.05%	53%
1998-99	42,311	21%	45%	2%	0.25%	52%
1999-00	42,015	21%	45%	2%		53%
2000-01	43,727	21%	44%	2%		54%

Source: SCHEV

Over the last five years, the percentage of students enrolled in at least one remedial course has remained relatively constant. In 1996-97, 20 percent of the first-time college students who graduated from a Virginia high school enrolled in at least one remedial course. Subsequently, in 1998-99, the percentage of first-time college students enrolled in at least one remedial course rose slightly to 21 percent – a percentage that has remained constant over the last two years.

The data indicates that a higher percentage of students taking remedial courses over the last five years are registered in remedial Math courses than are registered in remedial English courses. In 1996-97, of those students taking remedial courses, 52 percent were registered in remedial Math courses, and 44 percent were registered in remedial English courses. In 2000-01, 54 percent of the students registered in remedial Math courses, while 44 percent registered in remedial English courses. While the percentage of students taking remedial English courses decreased during that period, the percentage of students registered in remedial Math courses during that same period increased.

The chart below provides a five-year summary of the percentage of first-time college students who graduated from a Virginia high school and enrolled in the fall semester at a four-year public institution and have taken at least one remedial course at a community college or private institution.

Remediation Summary (Part B)
1996-2001

Year	# of First-Time Freshman Graduated from a Virginia High School and Enrolled at Virginia College taking at least One Remedial Course (Unduplicated)	Percentage of First-time Freshman Graduated from a Virginia High School Enrolled at a Public Four-Year College and taking at least One Remedial Course at a Community College/Private Institution (Unduplicated)
1996-97	7,344	0.8%
1997-98	7,960	3.1%
1998-99	8,704	1.8%
1999-00	8,817	1.2%
2000-01	9,357	1.1%

Source: SCHEV

Except for 1997-98, the percentage of students enrolled in at least one remedial course remained relatively constant. In 1996-97, 0.8 percent of the first-time college students who graduated from a Virginia high school and attended a four-year public institution enrolled in at least one remedial course at a community college. In 1997-98, that percentage rose to 3.1 percent. However, in 1998-99, the percentage of first-time college students enrolled in at least one remedial course rose dropped to 1.8 percent, an continued to drop to 1.2 and 1.1 percent in 1999 –00 and 2000-01, respectively.

Each public and private college and university in Virginia is responsible for gathering, coding, and submitting data to SCHEV on a previously prescribed schedule. For purposes of this analysis, SCHEV's research staff used the unit record course registration data file submitted to SCHEV and verified by the institutions. Courses are identified as to their level of instruction with a code of '10' being assigned to courses that are remedial in nature according to institutional standards. As a result, the definition of what constitutes remedial course work may vary by institution.

NEXT STEPS

For purposes of this report, SCHEV research staff only examined a specific population, first-time college students who graduated from a Virginia high school and enrolled in the fall semester at a college in Virginia. Further analysis on remediation should consider other important areas, such as the following:

1). What is the percentage of out-of-state first-time students taking remedial courses and, what is the percentage of students registering in each category of remedial course, such as English or math?

2). Does the percentage of first-time students requiring remediation vary among different geographic regions or high schools in the Commonwealth?

3.) How do the remediation rates vary from one public college to another and what might explain that variance?

4). Once fully implemented, will the Standards of Learning have a measurable impact on the number of students graduating from a Virginia high school requiring remediation?

5). What percentage "degree seeking" students enrolled in remedial courses eventually graduate from a four-year institution? What is the average time-to-degree for such students?

Ultimately, the results of the above analyses could be helpful in identifying certain characteristics, trends, and problem areas for consideration of policymakers, and education professionals.

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